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September

Brigadier General A. J. Goodpaster
Staff Secretary
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Andy:

I am making it a practice to post-mortem from the intelligence angle all situations where there are abrupt governmental or other changes. Burma has been a recent instance. I enclose a memorandum submitted to me indicating the reporting we have done through our Current Intelligence Bulletin on this subject over the past few months. I feel that our intelligence coverage of these developments was reasonably satisfactory, and that we were not taken by surprise.

I thought you might be interested in this memorandum of 26 September.

Faithfully yours,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Encl.

AWD:at

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(Encl: 26 Sept 1958 memo to DCI via DD/I from
AD/CI subj: Recent Reporting on Burma in OCI
Publications - Secret NOFORN)

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE)

White House

10-7427

SEP 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

SUBJECT : Army Coup in Burma

The Burmese Army seized nationwide control of the country on 26 September. Armed forces Commander in Chief Ne Win, who is strongly anti-Communist, was probably persuaded to act to prevent widespread violence and Communist gains in elections scheduled for November. Superficially, the government remains unchanged with U Nu as premier. However, U Nu has announced his acquiescence to army authority and will resign when parliament convenes on 28 October. He says Ne Win will serve as interim premier for six months and hold national elections within that time.

Top leaders of the government coalition (AFPFL), which had ruled Burma since independence in 1948, split in April. Personal rather than ideological difficulties between U Nu and his rivals, Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein, were the source of the break.

On 9 June, parliament voted down a no-confidence resolution introduced by Ba Swe and Kyaw Myein. Premier Nu's eight-vote victory was made possible by 44 votes from the Communist-dominated NUF. He was supported by only 48 members of his own party. At that time, as at all times since the split became public, the army remained neutral and maintained law and order despite threats of violence between followers of the two factions.

General Ne Win publicly and privately declared his impartiality among the non-Communist groups but warned that he would act to preserve the country from increased Communist influence or control. Army officers are united in their loyalty to Ne Win and in their anti-Communist views.

Since the 9 June parliamentary vote, U Nu has been bending every effort to end the Communist rebellion which began in 1949. Insurgents have been responding in large numbers but have left most of their arms behind. The army has been reported alarmed by these cached weapons and at the evident growing political strength of the Communist-oriented political parties.

The political fragmentation of Burma's non-Communist parties and the personal rivalries of their leaders have made the prospects for non-Communists increasingly bleak. This fragmentation has also led to increasing violence among their partisans in preparing for the expected November elections.

Burma's new leader, General Ne Win, has heretofore remained outside partisan politics. Since serving temporarily as deputy premier in 1949, he has devoted his time strictly to military matters.



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ALLEN W. DULLES
Director



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